

Preservation and Fostering of the Buddhist Heritage

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Historical Introduction

We are fairly certain that the Buddhists as well as the non-Buddhists of the world today are unlikely to make the mistake of looking for the heritage of Buddhism in the age-old pagodas or the dilapidated monasteries of Asia or even in Sri Lanka. Thanks to the energy and enthusiasm of Emperor Asoka, the message of Buddhism was well known outside India within a few centuries after the passing away of the Buddha.

Archaeological evidence like monuments and works of art are the outward manifestation of a more inward process of cultural growth of humans. The heritage of a people, particularly in relation to Buddhism, is to be sought essentially in the life and thought of those who constitute such a grouping. As the men and women think, so do they judge and act, leaving for posterity the products of their thinking and acting, for their weal or for their woe. It is no

exaggeration to say that the main target of Buddhism was the regulation of human thinking for the preservation of the entire world which the humans inhabit.

This process of willing and thinking moves in both directions of being constructive and destructive, wholesome or unwholesome. Such behavior may be witnessed at global level as invasions by one set of people of lands of others which have been the legitimate possessions of those who have owned them over the ages. They are also reflected in senseless defensive structures put up by big power blocks in the world, today these being nothing less than brutal atomic challenges by even growing up smaller nations. They inevitably carry with them a devastating potential, giving proof of human arrogance and foolhardiness.

But when the Buddha, more than twenty-five centuries ago, sent out his first band of sixty arhants or the enlightened disciples to go into the world and work for mankind, the injunction was that they work for the weal and welfare of mankind, for the good and benefit of many, including gods and men. It was not prompted by an expansionist attitude of conquest by conversion, with or without violence. At the heart of the Buddhist mission has always been the welfare of mankind, whoever they be or wherever they be .

Identification of Scope and Content

Buddhism's basic policy, via its religious direction, is first to maximize the healthy and harmonious acquisition of all that is needed to make human life, at its very down to earth level both physically and mentally, comfortable and pleasant. This in fact does cover all beings, both human and non-human. Hence its recurrent theme 'May all beings be well and happy' [*Sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittā*]. This, we would unhesitatingly declare, as `the living ethic ' of Buddhism which is basically required for the survival of life in the world. To us, this is the vital heritage of Buddhism which has been delivered to the world with such sensitivity and awareness. Out of this spirit also grow cultural and religious institutions which become its natural derivatives. It shall be our concern to talk

about their preservation and fostering as well.

Humans are declared to be characteristically pleasure seekers [*sukha-kāma*]. They are also said to be equally averse, by their very nature, to displeasure and discomfort [*dukkha-paṭikkūla*]. The world cannot, and must not turn its back on this principle. While death is declared in Buddhism to be more real than life, it is equally true that people still recoil from death or from being put to death. Therefore it is assumed that it is incumbent on humans to keep death and destruction of life, even in the animal world, at its farthest: One shall not destroy life nor get others to do so [*Na haneyya na ghātaye*].

This respect for life is undoubtedly the most fundamental feature of the Buddhist heritage which the Buddhists must stand up to uphold. As the impact of Buddhism came to be felt more and more on the life of Emperor Asoka of India, we see him increasingly practice this love towards animals. Not only the provision of sanctuaries for animals but even a reduction in the slaughter of animals for the royal kitchen is witnessed.

At the time Asoka sent his son Thera Mahinda to Sri Lanka with the message of Buddhism, Tissa who was the ruler at the time, was unfortunately caught on the wrong foot, going out on his pompous royal hunt to bag a deer. Unfortunately, he was at the time the ruler of a non-Buddhist Sri Lanka. It must have caused him no small amount of embarrassment to be caught red-handed in this stupid act by the Thera Mahinda, the emissary sent by his unseen friend Emperor Asoka, who arrived here with the Buddhism's message of love to all things both great and small. However, it did not take long in Sri Lanka for the turn of this tide. Kings themselves, reflecting a remarkable cultural sensitivity, began to show consideration for life even of animals. Ban on the slaughter of animals or *mā ghāta* came to be imposed in the island from time to time.

Kings of Sri Lanka like Amandagāminī, Silākāla, Aggabodhi IV and Mahinda III, following this tradition of just kingship, ordered from time to time that no

animals should be slaughtered, and set up veterinary hospitals for the treatment of sick animals. That even fishes, birds and beasts came under the loving care of a king like Sena I is undoubtedly owing to the benevolent influence of Buddhism. Sanctuaries for animals, including 'safe pools' for fish in rivers and lakes became a common sight in the land. This is to be viewed more as a magnanimous change of heart of the leadership of the state and a desirable change in the value systems of the land. It seems to make much less sense to view this [as some of our own Sri Lankan researchers at times have questioned] as a total imposition of vegetarianism or as leading, on the other hand, to malnutrition or economic disaster.

They also seem to have held the view that it was too presumptuous to believe that man had exclusive rights over the land in which he lived, to the exclusion of fauna and flora. On the other hand, they believed that the fauna and flora not only had a right of their own but also contributed in no small measure to the total harmonious growth of the land on which they live. This ecological sensitivity and the respect man has for it, is the main stay which in the long run saves him from extinction.

To be in harmony with the world around us, both with the animate and the inanimate, is one of the principles advocated in Buddhism, in order that man may attain his fullest development within himself and also secure for himself the maximum degree of success and happiness in life out of the world in which he lives. And this latter, Buddhism insists, must be achieved without violence to anyone or anything, and at the same time fostering peace on earth and goodwill among men. It must be remembered by all, the rulers and the ruled, that within the framework of Buddhist thinking, no heavenly injunction, no matter from where they are delivered, shall do violence to this.

World Trends Today

As we take into consideration this wide concept of the universe, we discover

that life on earth has to be a co-operative process, based on the principle of inter-relatedness, not only of mutual assistance but also of mutual non-interruption and non-interference. This has to be so in order that serious imbalances and consequent destruction of parts or the whole might not be brought about. The scientists of the world today emphatically announce the disastrous movement of man, unwittingly though, in the direction of destroying the biota of the world we live in. Note what the men, whose thinking in the world matters, now have to say on this subject.

This philosophy of amity or friendship in Buddhism [i.e. *mettā* in Pali or *maitrī* in Skt.] which is fully enunciated in the Metta Sutta of the Buddhists [Sn. vv.143-152 and Khp. p.8f.], brings within its fold all grades of life, of man and bird and beast, no matter how large or small they are. Seen or unseen, near or far, all life is encompassed within thoughts of loving kindness. In displeasure or in ill-will, one shall not long for or pray for the destruction of another. With more or less maternal affection, one is called upon to look at life in the universe. This attitude to the world we live in is expected to pervade all areas of Buddhist life, both religious and secular.

The protagonists of the idea of *biophilia hypothesis* [See The Biophilia Hypothesis edited by Stephen R. Kellert and Edward O. Wilson 1993] whom we quote in our paper are laudably moving today in the same direction as espoused in Buddhism. But they cannot emphasize it any more than what their Sri Lankan predecessors have implicitly done more than a thousand years earlier. The contemporary stress on this kind of thinking, namely that the desire for the survival of man must go closely hand in hand with an equal degree of respect for the survival and well-being of the animal world around us is boldly reflected in the writings of today's philosopher-thinkers like Peter Singer [Professor of Philosophy at Monash University, Australia.]. One must co-operatively read with sympathy his **Animal Liberation** [1975, 1990] and his **Save the Animals** [co-authored with Barbara Dover and Ingrid Newkirk [1990,1991] to comprehend the total

dimension of this line of thinking and to meaningfully relate it to the Buddhist concept of love or universal loving kindness which is conveyed in the concept of *mettā*.

This spirit of concern for the world we live in and the total content thereof, both animate and inanimate, is reflected today in many parts of the thinking world. Here is Frances Moore Lappe expressing a very candid opinion on this subject in her **Diet for a Small Planet** [Twentieth Anniversary Edition: November 1991 / Ballantine Books, New York].

'The change you and I witness in a lifetime now exceeds what in previous centuries transpired over many generations. And we who were born after World War II are the first to know that our choices count: They count on a global scale. They matter in evolutionary time. In our species' fantastic rush toward "modernization" we obliterate millions of other species, transfigure the earth's surface, and create climate-changing disruption of the upper atmosphere, all powerfully altering the path of evolution.'

More recently we discovered Jeremy Riffkin writing on this same theme in his book which is amazingly titled **BEYOND BEEF**, and even more meaningfully subtitled **Breakdown of the Cattle Culture**.

A New Awareness Around Us

We have brought together here these brief observations from many cultures and many continents to show the contemporary trend in the world today to respect, without any reservation, all forms of life in the universe. This is happening today without any distinctions of religious creeds, partialities or prejudices, primarily motivated by a long term awareness of its need for man's survival on this planet. The philosophers and scientists of the world are unanimously agreed that this awareness of the need to respect life must widely spread among the humans who are the chief miscreants in the gamble for destruction of life. For the humans have been far too long obsessed with their

self-assumed superiority over the rest of the world which they believe has been created for them.

Having put forward what might be termed the Buddhist point of view with regard to respectful and peaceful co-existence with all components of life which constitute life in the universe as a whole, we wish to indicate to the Buddhists how the current trends in scientific and philosophical thinking in the world today are closely supportive of this Buddhist stand, perhaps even without a direct awareness of Buddhism.

A World-wide Sensitivity

It is well known to all Buddhists and to all students of Buddhism, and we expect that it should be so too, that the spiritual build up of Buddhism, at least in the Theravada tradition, consists of three ascending tiers, each rising above the other. They are gradual and graduated, we insist, one following the preceding one. One cannot bypass or jump the other.

These are very serious considerations for everyone who wishes to practice Buddhism as a religion or way of life. Of these, the very rock bottom base is the cultivation of harmonious inter-personal relationships among all who constitute life in the universe, whether human, animal or even below. This is what is broadly labeled as *sīla* or moral rectitude or social propriety. The decadence and degeneracy of the world, we are sorry to say, has sunk so low that we are not at all sure whether such a concept does even exist in our midst today.

Man seems to destroy life through his greed for what he believes to be his personal survival. This is the calculated process of destruction through large scale rearing of cattle for meat, hide and other needs. In this process, he little realizes that he is destroying the chances of survival on this planet of every other being, including himself. This greed for personal need, and this we say emphatically together with the social philosophers of the day, is a totally misdirected and self-assumed need which blinds him to the worldwide

destruction he brings upon mankind.

The sources we have already quoted above like Frances Moore Lappe, Peter Singer and Jeremy Riffkin, from different periods of time and from many different parts of the world, have established with more than adequate statistical evidence the folly of these endeavors of misguided economists and planners in the world. Those who plan merely on paper, sitting at their desks half-stupefied as it were, unmindful of the consequences of their paper work, have to be put today into the same category as the men who planned the splitting up of the atom, unmindful of what could happen in Hiroshima.

Besides this massive global destruction of life to feed humans which has been successfully pointed out by saner men and women of greater sensibility to be a misguided foolish venture, there is also the largely organized killing of animals for industrial purposes. These include hunting of whales for oil, trapping of bears, foxes and others for furs and hunting down of elephants for ivory, to serve the interests of limited groups of elitists in the world. These are far too numerous to mention here.

A Heritage to Preserve and Foster

1. Love and Respect for Life

In an endeavor to preserve and foster the Buddhist heritage, the cultural orientation of Buddhism must necessarily be the first move. In the name of Buddhism what do we wish to show as our Buddhistness and offer to the world? It has to be none other than the message of love of our great Master who is come down to us in world history as Buddha Gotama. Today, he is being referred to as Shākyamuni or the Sage of the Śākyans. This is how the whole Buddhist world including the Mahāyānists and the Vajrayānists now recognize him. It is undoubtedly this vision of love or *maitrī* which gives the future Buddha his name Maitreya [Japanese Miroku Bosatsu].

Direct towards the world the same degree

Of love you show yourself:

Attānaṃ upamaṃ katvā.

Therefore kill not nor bring about any killing:

Na haneyya na ghātaye.

Dhp. v.129

In a Buddhist Sri Lanka, it should not need much tutoring to get this message across. This is where the religiousness of every Buddhist should necessarily begin. Out of the five basic precepts of the Buddhist *pañca-sīla*, the very first one begins with the restraint relating to destruction of life: *pāṇātipātā veramaṇī*. This, we maintain, is the heritage worth preserving, worth fostering and passing down to posterity. Let us begin by reducing killing in this country to a minimum, whether for consumption or for export.

To the Buddhist, what matters is the killing, the destruction of a life, no matter who does it. Whether it is the lady of house herself or the kitchen maid-maid through whom she gets it done, as in getting the live crabs bought from the fish-monger ready for the table. Or more distantly, patronizing the consumer-oriented meat market which works on a very sound economic principle of supply and demand - the more you consume, the more we supply. And we shall do the killing. The Suttanipāta, in the Dhammika Sutta, very judiciously indicates these three different areas within which humans indulge in the destruction of life for their own sensual gratification.

Pāṇaṃ na hane na ca ghātayeyya

Na cānujaññā hanataṃ paresaṃ.

Sn. v. 394

One shall not kill any living thing,

Nor shall he cause another to do so.

Nor shall he approve of another doing so.

Translated by the author

The world as a whole is now convincingly pointing out that neither for the sake of more food for human consumption nor for the sake of more money for the state coffers, do humans need to go menacingly at the animal world. It seems more a bestial policy befitting life in the jungle than a civilized society of so-called humans marching in the direction of the twenty-first century.

2. Respect for the role of Woman in Society

If Sri Lanka is to make any contribution to the cultural uplift of the world at this juncture, it has to be unequivocally stated that it has to be via the noble teachings of Buddhism. It must truly be discovered by the Buddhists much more than by the non-Buddhists, that the Buddhist heritage which we have inherited is a vast treasure house which can adequately meet numerous world needs of today.

In recent decades, the western world in particular has begun to make global agitations about injustices done to women in various cultures, sometimes real and at others merely alleged and imaginary. Well over twenty-five centuries ago, the Buddha was well aware of these. Incidents of injustice generated against the female of the species in India were well known to the Buddha as a spiritual leader and consequently as a social reformer, he vociferously spoke for the redemption of woman both in religion and society. Evidence of this is vastly scattered in early Buddhist texts whose authenticity, thanks to the modern techniques of literary verification, is established beyond doubt.

As the feminist activist movement gathered momentum in many different parts of the world, both east and west, and even in Buddhist countries, prompted by various groups with diverse interests of their own, many protagonists with thoroughly inadequate credentials have joined in the fray. We regret to say, as far as Buddhism is concerned, we discover many enthusiasts with inadequate academic backgrounds dipping their heads into garbage bins, unable to

distinguish between the real and the fake, the authentic and the inauthentic. They hang on to and quote as their primary sources, writers and 'researchers with a name and fame' whose findings we have challenged many a time and debunked as utterly misdirected. One good example is a writer who has made a name by declaring in one of his big books that 'Buddhism is not concerned with the virginity or chastity of woman because Buddhist monks, unlike the Hindu, do not actively participate at marriage ceremonies.'

We make no attempt here to enumerate these malicious and mischievous allegations or bring to book the miscreants who indulge in this kind of activity with fair regularity. This certainly has to be part of preserving the heritage of Buddhism and safeguarding it against unwarranted assaults. On our part, let us present to this distinguished audience just one or two instances of the remarkably courageous stand taken by the Buddha in his defense of the rights of women. They reveal to us the very low ebb of the tide to which the prestige of the Indian woman had sunk around the time of the Buddha. In the Samyutta Nikaya, the Buddha advises King Pasenadi of Kosala, with a stern note of correction, that a woman with her intellectual, social and religious accomplishment gets far ahead of even her male companions. This is how he puts it:

Itthī pi hi ekacchīyā seyyā posā janādhīpa
 medhāvīnī sīlavatī sassudevā patibbatā
 tassā yo jāyati poso sūro hoti disampati
 tādiso subhāriyā putto rajjam pi anusāsati.

SN. I. 86

Some females, O King, are better than men.
 If that girl be wise and virtuous,
 and is respectful of her in-laws,
 and remains faithful to her husband.
 A boy born of such a woman

shall be an efficient leader in the land.
 Such a son of that fortunate girl
 shall even rule a kingdom.

Translated by the author

Here, the argument is more than a mere gender consideration of being man or woman. It is the accomplishment of each one, man or woman, as a social requirement. It is a collectivist attitude, not a separatist one, an attitude of having both men and women in society who can make a vital contribution to its well-being. Wisdom as a powerful tool of judgement [*medhāvinī*], accompanied by a sense of virtue or moral rectitude [*sīlavatī*] was as good then as it should be at any time now, today or tomorrow, anywhere in the world. Buddhist thinking, much more than anywhere else, embraces a wider area of societal wholesomeness.

It covers, for instance, the territory of the extended family. In-law relationships tend to be safeguarded thereby. A newly married girl is to be safely and respectfully related, reciprocally at the same time, to her husband's mother and father [*sassu-devā*]. An honorable and dignified marital relationship of one man to one woman was the target of Buddhist society, well before the menace of aids crept into the world. Conjugal fidelity [*patibbatā*], whether the rest of the world likes it or not, was at a premium. This requires that in a Buddhist world, within what is intended to be a Buddhist heritage, all these attitudes towards the woman in society should be safeguarded and publicly upheld.

Thus the Buddhist attitude to the woman in society is more than evident here. In such a Buddhist context, let us see what really is the position of woman today, in the home and in the society, more than twenty-three centuries after the arrival of Buddhism in our land? These are the questions to which we must address ourselves as we prepare to talk of our heritage.

It is not a day too early for us to take stock of the situation of degradation of woman in society. Like the first plea we have already made for the respect for all

life in the world which is now globally sponsored, so is this concern for the protection and upgrading of the status of woman. Buddhism advocates it and the state with fifty years of independence which now seems keen on preserving and fostering the heritage of Buddhism must step in forthwith. It is recorded in Sri Lanka, in our own stone inscriptions that about a thousand years ago, it was possible for a young girl to walk unmolested across the land from end to end, with a precious jewel in her hand. That, we say again, is our Buddhist heritage.

3. Safeguards for Sanity and Sobriety

Psychologists and psychotherapists world over are now agreed on the need for mindfulness and awareness as powerful tools for the successful handling of cases of maladjusted human minds. The Buddha gave these two [*sati* and *sampajañña*] as two of the powerful bases of mental robustness. While therapists call upon individuals, both men and women, to develop these as means to stabilize their day to day living process, the world at large is viewing a formidable challenge to this requirement in the availability of a vast range of alcohol and drugs in our society, everywhere in the world. Whether countries are developed or under-developed, drugs at world level have no difficulty in finding markets in these places. It is virtually a gold mine for some fantastic drug peddlers while it is death and social disruption to the rest of the human community.

The Buddha saw the danger in this loss of sanity and good judgement through drugs and alcohol. The much abused precept of *surā-meraya-majja-pamādaṭṭhānā veramanī sikkhā-padaṃ* has been laid down as a safeguard against this menace of drugs and alcohol. Even the world today is becoming fully conscious of the ill effects of drugs and alcohol on humans. Many nations are imposing restrictions on the use of alcohol by young persons. Trafficking in drugs, in many countries, carry alongside with it the invariable death sentence.

We have now highlighted three areas which we hold, without any hesitation, as the major segments of our Buddhist heritage. These are what make humanity,

at a global level, the wiser and richer. Fragments of our heritage are not to be raked out of the ground. Bricks and bits of stone are easily seen and identified by archaeologists, even amateur ones. But the spiritually and culturally valuable ones, embedded deep in what we cherish as the scriptural tradition, are less discernible even to the academics. To most of them, they do not provide enough of a bite to chew.

Buddhist lands all over Asia have made their modest contributions to the world in their own way. India, via China, has given the world Japanese Zen Buddhism which holds its own with much pride. Japanese Buddhism has also given the world *Ike bana* or the art of flower arrangement, through its zealous endeavor to honor the Buddha with flowers. The world has now learnt many forms of therapeutic meditation [for peace and tranquillity here and now] from Thailand, Burma and Tibet in addition to the totality of the Zen Buddhist tradition which stole a march over the western world very much earlier.

The much-needed Social Correctives today

The world today is very conscientiously reaching out for new values on their own, and we believe that these are very much in consonance with the values put forward by Buddhism more than two and a half millennia ago. The world's search for new meaningful values is continuing unabated.

It is this awareness of our Buddhist heritage which must come to the fore now, both as our prestigious contribution to the world and as a factor for our own survival in our own land. It is not being too pessimistic to say that we are on the brink of cultural annihilation.

To repeat here again, the components of this awareness should be:

1. The respect and love for all forms of life in the world, both human and animal, near and far, seen and unseen and of whatever magnitude they be. It is now continually being proved by men and women whose thinking and judgement matters, that this is a universal must.

2. An unquestioned respect and veneration for the role the woman plays in society for which she must and does continually qualify herself with the fullest cooperation of the society in which she lives. Both the state and the society, with the smaller units of the family within it, must courageously come forward to safeguard her rights. This is a very distinctly Buddhist stand with regard to feminist rights, put forward very specifically and courageously, well before the champions of today stepped forward to make a much belated start.

3. The need to alert the world community against today's widespread use of drugs and alcohol by persons of all ages, both male and female. Quite apart from their unquestionable health hazards, the consequent loss of judgement they bring about every instant, invariably shatters the moral norms of society. By the year 200 A.D. the Buddhists of Afghanistan had realistically accepted this and thought it fit to leave behind sermons on stone for the benefit of posterity. We have already referred to these above. The world at large too, has realized this today, and gives more thought to the medical bills the governments have to pay on account of hospitalization through use of alcohol than to the gross income they earn through the state-sponsored sale of alcohol in the land.

Buddhism requires that rulers who govern countries must do so in conformity to the dhamma, and in consultation with those religious leaders of the land who seriously endeavor to culture themselves spiritually in terms of their dhamma. This advice of the latter is recommended to be undertaken by rulers, by whatever name they go, particularly in times of political crisis.

In the world today, religion is held to be a vital ingredient even in statecraft. This is being more and more accepted by thinking men and women of the English speaking world today. Forget not the 1994 publication of the Oxford University Press: *Religion, the Missing Dimension in Statecraft*. This is a stern reminder of the changing values of the world today. This we uphold as a turn in

the right direction.

This has been more than anticipated in the Buddhist theory of the Universal Monarch or Cakkavatti King who on being approached by subordinate rulers for political counsel, advises them on just rule which upholds morality in the land and makes no overtures at all towards any political restructuring.

These bring our deliberations on the subject Preservation and Fostering of the Buddhist Heritage to a close. In our study we have been both descriptive and prescriptive. We make an honest bid to be sympathetic and constructive. Please understand us in that spirit.



Preservation and Fostering of the Buddhist Heritage

- an abstract

Bhikkhu Professor Dhammavihari

What is it that we need to preserve and foster as the Buddhist heritage? The very definite answer to this should be ' It is what the Buddha stood up for as Teacher of gods and men ' [*Satthā deva-manussānam*]. It has to be much more than Buddhist monuments, intact or dilapidated. The real Buddhist heritage is what contributes even today to the weal and welfare of the many in the world [*bahujana-hitāya bahujana-sukhāya*], as it was then. This therefore is to be sought in the dhamma of the Master [Skt. dharma], by those with a penetrative and an analytical mind, by those who do well understand the needs of the world today. The missionary zeal of the Buddhist has to be necessarily coupled with this sensitivity.

The world is very expressive today in making known its needs. The cry for safeguarding every manner of life in the world we live in comes from every

quarter. The world of biological sciences is now very articulate as it speaks of the bio-diversity and the eco-systems around us. On the other hand, the continuous wanton massacre of life in the world through human greed and human ignorance is appalling. Buddhism, if it is honestly and thoroughly understood by the Buddhists themselves, the problem should lose half its gravity. Therefore time is right and time is ripe now for Sri Lanka to step in right here and reverberate with conviction the voice of Buddhism: *Sabbe sattā bhavantu sukhittā* = May all beings be well and comfortable.

The heritage of Buddhism is essentially the welfare of mankind. The message of the Buddha with which he dispatched his first band of sixty disciples, insisting that no two go in the same direction, was *Caratha bhikkhave cārikaṃ bahujanahitāya bahujanasukhāya atthāya hitāya devamnussānam*: Go ye forth into the world for the welfare and well-being of many beings, of both gods and men. It is for us to preserve the spirit of that.

Buddhism requires that rulers who govern countries must do so in conformity to the dhamma, and in consultation with those religious men of the land who seriously endeavour to culture themselves spiritually in terms of their dhamma. This advice of the latter is recommended to be undertaken by rulers, particularly in times of political crisis. We shall quote to you chapter and verse of this from very authentic Buddhist texts, if needed. In the world today, religion is held to be a vital ingredient in statecraft. This is being more and more accepted by thinking men and women of the English speaking world today. Forget not the 1994 publication of the Oxford University Press: *Religion, the Missing Dimension in Statecraft*.

This has been more than anticipated in the Buddhist theory of the Universal Monarch or Cakkavatti King who on being approached by subordinate rulers for political counsel, advises them on just rule which upholds morality in the land and makes no overtures at all towards any political restructuring. No supremacist

privileges are to be entertained, neither for democrats nor for socialists, neither for nationalists, nor for separatists for whatever pleas they make.

It is our conviction that the Government of Sri Lanka, after full fifty years of political experimenting, should take a definite and positive stand, after serious deliberation, on the following very specific suggestions we make. Many more could be duly considered and incorporated. We believe they are equally well applicable to the world at large, anywhere and at any time.

1. That neither religion, ethnicity nor political ideology shall be a basis for any acts of violence in Sri Lanka. This is definitely a slur on the heritage left to us by the religion of the Buddha. There shall be a territorially integrated united Sri Lanka for all peoples with equal rights in every part of the island. This shall be the basis of government. Any acts of violence springing from ethnicity, religion or political divergence, contrary to this state policy, call them separatist wars, right of self determination or any other, has to be dealt with, utilizing the highest punishment available in the land.
2. Law enforcement authority in the country shall be provided with enough muscle to secure and safeguard a code of universal ethics of good living in the land, incorporating in it i. respect for life, ii. respect for the ownership of legitimately acquired property and possessions of all people, iii. respect for the genders as male and female, without any harassment or molestation, duly recognizing the respectful role of each in society, iv. respect for honesty and trustworthiness in all areas of social, political and religious life and v. a social awareness of the need for the people of the land to safeguard sanity of judgement, with positive assistance provided by the state to reduce the use of alcohol in the land and at the same time eliminating the menace of drugs at all age levels among men and women.
3. The above are prescriptive steps for the reduction of crime and evil in the land. Any form of fostering a culture must imply this. We further suggest that

as supportive measure in the revival of a culture which we now have lost or are on the brink of losing, that the state introduces a semi-compulsory scheme of agricultural productivity in the entire island. This would invariably provide a system of sound occupational therapy as well as provide and guarantee a plentiful supply of home-grown fruits and vegetables, adding to a healthy sense of national pride. Such scheme should be regularly boosted with adequate rewards and inducements for those who take meaningful and successful steps in this direction.

It is seriously felt that the agricultural potential of the land is not put even to its minimal use, both in the growing and preserving of our own fruit and vegetable. For its monetary gain, we know, a few do and did take to the culture of exotic plants, including orchids as well as gherkins and baby corn. These are done by fits and starts and hence rarely turn out to be good enough for a sustainable economy.



A Background study of what Buddhism stands for.

In the context of Buddhism today, it is important to note that most monks and laymen as well as some scholars and less scholarly ones seem to forget that Buddhism has, more or less an unbroken history of more than twenty-five centuries. This continuity and consistency is more so in the Theravāda tradition of Sri Lanka whose authoritative texts are preserved in the Pali language.

Tradition-wise, world Buddhism has come to possess at least three distinct strands, labelled as Theravāda, Mahāyana and Vajrayāna. Land-wise too, they seemed until very recent times, to stand also distinctly apart. Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar and Laos are generally credited as being custodians of the so-called early Buddhism of Theravāda or the tradition of the Elders.

From about the beginning of the Christian era, a new theistic-like trend, with an in-built saviour concept of Bodhisattva [or Pu-sa in Japanese] began to develop while Buddhism was still on the Indian soil and soon acquired for itself the designation of Mahāyāna or the Great or Magnanimous tradition.

The Vajrayāna also had its origin in India but much of its luxuriant growth took place in Tibet outside India. More than any of the other forms of Buddhism, the Vajrayāna seems to be responding to many of the local and contemporary needs of the land in which it developed its own stature.

All these different schools or traditions of Buddhism, springing up in diverse localities, and responding to a vast array of human needs, can be said to have been extremely sensitive to popular demands. In the process they appear to have assimilated many beliefs and practices which are totally alien to the original Buddhist teachings. Therefore they tended to possess an alluring attractiveness and a capacity to delight and gratify the worshipper and the supplicant. Therefore it is also not surprising that they rapidly developed themselves in the areas of ritual, worship and prayer. Their temples, both from within and without, virtually became enticing and seductive. They seem to undertake to cater to a wide range of human needs, with varying levels of emotional requirements.

